



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**



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THE NATURE CONSERVANCY AND U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS ANNOUNCE PARTNERSHIP TO IMPROVE MANAGEMENT OF U.S. RIVERS

AGREEMENT INCLUDES EFFORT TO IMPROVE MANAGEMENT OF THE ROANOKE RIVER



The Nature Conservancy and the Corps are collaborating on changes in the management of the John H. Kerr Dam on North Carolina's Roanoke River. The organizations announced today a new agreement to expand this project to dams across the country.

WASHINGTON, D.C. –The Nature Conservancy and the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers today announced a collaborative effort to improve the management of dams on various rivers across the country.

Under the partnership, entitled the Sustainable Rivers Project, the organizations will work together to improve dam operations, helping to restore and protect the health of rivers and surrounding natural areas while continuing to meet human needs for services such as flood control and power generation. Both organizations expect the partnership to improve the quality of America's waterways.

“At the heart of this agreement is a shared vision of restoring and protecting hundreds of river miles and thousands of acres of some of our nation's most important natural habitats,” said Steven McCormick, president of The Nature Conservancy. “This agreement is a result of conservationists and dam managers sitting down at the table together,

stating our objectives openly, and agreeing to work together to find solutions that are acceptable to all involved.”

“We intend to build sustainability into the planning, construction and operation of our projects, and it is critical that we adapt our management of America's rivers to meet the needs of the human and natural communities ” said Lt. Gen. Robert B. Flowers, the Army's Chief of Engineers. “The Nature Conservancy has a great deal of expertise to help us make that possible.”

The Army Corps of Engineers operates 630 dams for flood control, navigation and other purposes on numerous rivers across the United States.

The Sustainable Rivers Project will consist of a coordinated review and alteration of dam operations. There are, at this time, 13 candidate dams on nine rivers in nine states. Other dams may also become part of this project.

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State(s)	River(s)	Dam(s)
Arkansas and Missouri	White / Black / Little Red	Table Rock / Bull Shoals / Norfolk / Clearwater
Arizona	Bill Williams	Alamo
Kentucky	Green	Green
New Hampshire	Blackwater	Blackwater
North Carolina/ Virginia	Roanoke	John H. Kerr
Pennsylvania	French Creek	Union City / Woodcock
Washington	Skagit	Gorge / Diablo / Ross

The Conservancy and the Corps are basing their expectation for success at these sites upon their successful collaborative efforts to improve the quality of habitat and other conditions along the Green River in Kentucky. The Green ranks as the nation's fourth most diverse river in terms of variety of fish and mussel species, and provides water and recreational opportunities to thousands of people throughout the region.

The Conservancy and the Corps worked to identify more ecologically compatible releases from the Green River Dam. These include delaying fall reservoir releases until after the spawning period for certain fish and mussel species, and using the releases to mimic natural variations. Such changes will provide significant benefits to plants and animals, without sacrificing the dam's primary purpose, the ability to prevent downstream flood damage. The changes extend recreational access to the reservoir by more than a month. The proposed changes recently passed public review, and will be implemented this fall.

The Conservancy and the Corps have begun or will soon begin discussions at the other project sites. While the variables at each site will be different, the approach will remain one based on collaboration.

The Nature Conservancy's NC Chapter is collaborating with the states of Virginia and North Carolina and the Wilmington District of the Corps to examine operations of the John H. Kerr Dam on the Roanoke River. "After 50 years of operation, and huge demographic change in the Roanoke River basin, we know it is time to evaluate our operations and determine what we can do to enhance conditions on the Roanoke," said Lisa Hetherman, the Corps Project Manager. "The Nature Conservancy will be making a pivotal contribution in our flow requirements technical analysis."

"The Lower Roanoke River is a nationally significant ecological treasure," said Sam Pearsall, the Conservancy's Roanoke River project director. "It's enormously gratifying to have TNC and the Corps recognize it as such in this agreement and commit to finding ways to manage it to sustain the ecosystems downstream of John H. Kerr."

"The optimal solution will not always be obvious or easy, but the optimal solution is what we will work together to find," said McCormick.

"Everyday we learn a little bit more about how we can better serve the public, and that includes how we can better protect and restore our nation's natural treasures," concluded LTG Flowers.

Sustainable Rivers Project: Implementation Essentials

On the selected rivers, The Nature Conservancy and the US Army Corps of Engineers plan to:

- Work together to determine the water flow requirements needed to restore and maintain natural ecosystem health
- Work with the surrounding communities to determine the influences and needs of people in the area
- Identify areas of uncertainty and/or potential conflict
- Conduct water management experiments to resolve uncertainties
- Find resolutions to conflicts
- Design and implement an adaptive water management plan that incorporates the need for ongoing assessment and revision

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